

June 16, 2009 - Slaughter Bill Will Force High Schools to Disclose Spending on Girls Sports

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* Promote Equal Athletic Opportunities for Girls *

Legislation Aims to Promote Equal Athletic Participation for Girls - Studies Show Sports Can Have A Positive Impact on Adolescent Girls Yet Inequalities in HS Sports Programs Persist

Washington, DC - U.S. Rep. Louise M. Slaughter today introduced legislation designed to help high schools improve athletic opportunities for girls and encourage greater participation in sports for all students. The High School Athletics Accountability Act of 2009 will require that high schools report basic data on the number of female and male students in their athletic programs as well as the expenditures made for their sports teams.

Recent studies have shown that there is still great disparity in high school athletics programs between the opportunities given to boys and that given to girls. According to one study, female students receive 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than do male students, which translates into many lost prospects for athletic scholarships.

"Girls who play sports are healthier, more confident, receive higher grades, and have access to more opportunities than non-athletes," said Rep. Slaughter. "While Title IX has helped to increase the number of women and girls participating in sports, there is still much work to do if we are going to truly level the playing field. We need more information about high-school athletic programs and accountability to ensure that our nation's young women have the opportunities they deserve."

Athletic participation has been shown to have a positive impact on young girls. While adolescent females are twice as likely to suffer from depression, studies have proven that athletic females have higher confidence, better self-images, and lower levels of depression. Moreover, a majority of women identified as key leaders in Fortune 500 companies participated in sports, as did executive business women.

"The High School Athletics Accountability Act is an important step in offering increased transparency and better information at a time when students need to be physically engaged and active," said Karen Durkin, Chief Executive Officer of the Women's Sports Foundation. "The numbers tell the story of who is playing which sports. With these facts and data, we'll know if the chances for our children to participate are fair and we'll be better prepared to serve their needs."

The High School Athletics Accountability Act will also have a positive health impact on our youth. It is well known that childhood obesity is on the rise and that a lack of physical activity is a contributing factor, demonstrating a need for

enhanced school athletic programs.

"AAUW believes that sunshine is often the best disinfectant, making information public that in turn can help schools and communities identify and solve problems," said Linda D. Hallman, CAE, Executive Director of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). "By shedding light on the current status of programs, we can determine where schools stand today and where improvements might need to be made tomorrow. Congress would be taking positive, proactive steps towards ensuring compliance with Title IX in requiring that schools make these simple disclosures about their athletic programs."

"Young women in high school still receive fewer opportunities to play sports than do boys, and girls who do play often receive second-class treatment in areas such as facilities, uniforms, and scheduling of games," said Marcia D. Greenberger, Co-President of the National Women's Law Center. "Schools owe our nation's daughters a level playing field, and this bill will help ensure that they live up to that standard."

BACKGROUND

Provisions of the High School Athletics Accountability Act of 2009

Under the bill, high schools must report the following information about the athletic opportunities available to students:

- Number of students attending the school
- Number of male and female students participating in sports
- Number of boys' and girls' sports teams
- Expenditures for all sports teams

Schools already collect the data required under this legislation, however, this data is currently not publicly available. The bill is consistent with existing law in that it requires schools to collect and report data that helps make them accountable to national standards.

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